

# Food Safety Issues and Aging America

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# ***“Food safety education for the prevention of foodborne illness among U.S. residents 65 and older”***

1. Research
  - Telephone survey
  - Focus groups
2. Extension
  - “To Your Health: Food Safety for Seniors”
3. Education
  - CD development and distribution



# Research

## □ Objectives

- Identify current behaviors
- Understand the cognitive variables that are correlated with adaptive or maladaptive behaviors

## □ Methodology

- Telephone interviews
- Focus groups



# Variables of interest

- ☐ Risk perception
- ☐ Attitudes
- ☐ Knowledge
- ☐ Behavior



# Telephone survey

- ☐ Random sample
- ☐ 65 or more years
- ☐ 5 or more meals a week
- ☐ Reside in 48 contiguous states of USA



# Respondents to telephone survey

- 353 participants
  - 70% female
  - 30% male
- Mean age 74.3 years
- Average preparation of 12 meals per week



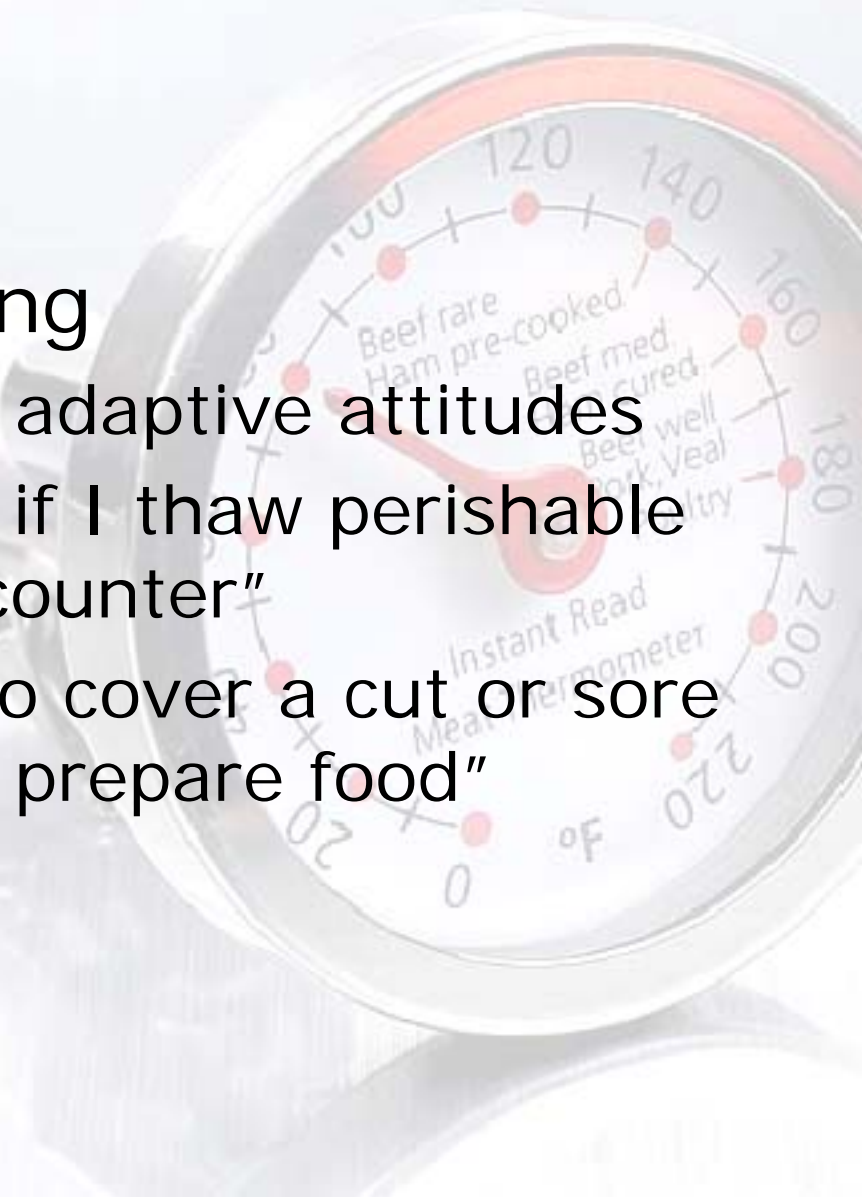
# Risk perceptions

- ❑ 56% said micro-organism contamination serious or very serious
- ❑ Chicken was perceived as most hazardous
- ❑ Fresh fruits and vegetables judged least hazardous
- ❑ More concern for food prepared outside of the home



# Attitudes

- ❑ Generally adaptive
- ❑ Education level finding
  - More education, less adaptive attitudes
  - “I am not concerned if I thaw perishable food on the kitchen counter”
  - “It is not important to cover a cut or sore on my hand before I prepare food”



# Knowledge

- ☐ 57% did not know proper temperature for ground beef
- ☐ 60% said cook-by-look acceptable
- ☐ Thought perishables at room temp for 2 hours was safe to eat



# Behavior

- ❑ 37% eat undercooked egg
- ❑ 26% eat uncooked cookie dough
- ❑ 26% eat raw sprouts or alfalfa
- ❑ 49% do not check refrigerator temp
- ❑ 90% cook-by-look



# Hand washing

☐ 1 (always).....7 (never)

- Wash before preparing 1.5
- After pet handling 1.5
- After raw meats 1.3

☐ Education level finding

- More educated, less hand washing



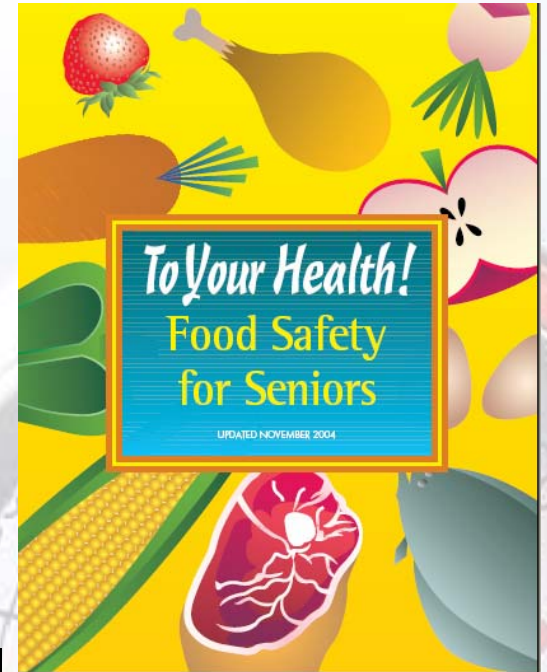
# Findings to take to the field

- ☐ Specific foods
  - Undercooked eggs
  - Raw sprouts
  - Raw fruits and vegetables
- ☐ Preparation habits
  - Thermometer use/cook-by-look
  - Leaving foods at room temperature
- ☐ Education level



# Focus Groups

- ❑ Eight focus groups
- ❑ 14 theme-centered areas
  - General food safety concern
  - Amount of perceived control
  - Meat thermometers
  - Approaches to changing behavior
  - Information sources

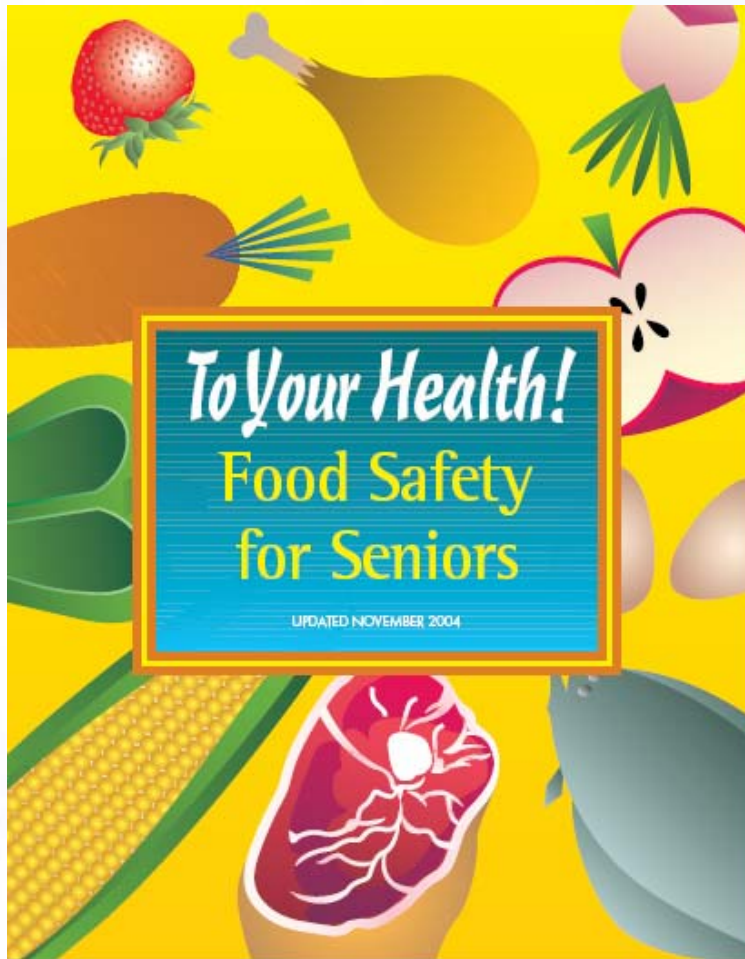


# Findings to take to the field

- ❑ Overall concern topics centered on
  - Cleanliness
  - Microorganism
  - Public cooking-restaurants and vendors
  - Cook by look
- ❑ Responses to video
  - New information/provided needed repetition
  - Lengthy/condescending



# Extension education program



- ☐ Followed up with seniors receiving the booklet
- ☐ Little evidence that one-time exposure in real-world environment impacts food-safety attitudes, perceptions, or behaviors

# Educational CD

FOOD SAFETY  
*Education*



>> Student

>> Instructor



# Publications

Gordon, J. C., Raacke, J., Penner, K. P., Boone, K., Friel, B., & Remig, V. M.(2004). Risk perception, attitude, knowledge and safe food handling behavior among those 65 years and older. Proceedings of the Association for International Agricultural Extension Education, Ireland, 20, 724-734.  
<http://www.aiaee.org/2004/Accepted/060.pdf>

Boone, K., Penner, K. P., Gordon, J. C., Remig, K., Harvey, L. & Clark, T. (2005). Common Themes of Safe Food-Handling Behavior Among Mature Adults. Food Protection Trends 25 (9), 706-711.

# *QUESTIONS?*

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